

The Supremacy of Christ

A Study of Colossians

Week 08: Living Faith (Part 3): Maintaining Family Harmony

Scripture

Colossians 3:18-21

Key Points (Where We Are in History)

- Paul wrote to the Colossian Church, while he was under house arrest in Rome
- They had never met in person, but Paul wrote in response to the report of Epaphras (their pastor)
- The church was facing pressure to *mix religious systems*
- Paul wrote with the goal of showing Christ's supremacy over all things
- Colossians 1-2 (doctrine); Colossians 3-4 (practical outworking in our daily lives)

Motivation (Why They Need to Know It)

Last week Paul talked about putting to death the old life in favor of new life...

- Remain Sexually Pure
- Maintain Relational Peace
- Today we're talking about household harmony

Information (What They Need to Know)

Let's keep in mind where the strength of keeping household harmony comes from.

Galatians 5:16 (ESV) ...walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

“...walking by the Spirit’ is not something we do in order to get the Spirit’s help, but rather it is something we do by the enablement of the Spirit.” – John Piper

Four action steps when striving for harmony in the home...

ACTION STEP 1: Wives must submit to their husbands

Colossians 3:18 (ESV) Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Where did that tension in marriage begin?

Genesis 3:16 (ESV) "Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you."

At the Fall, women would become **contrary to their husbands** and men would become **domineering over their wives**. **BOTH** are extremes.

What Marital Submission IS NOT:

✓ A Position of Dominance

Genesis 2:18 (ESV) Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper [*a counterpart*] fit for him."

"The words of this verse emphasize man's need for a companion, a helper, and an equal. He was incomplete without someone to complement him in fulfilling the task of filling, multiplying, and taking dominion over the earth. This points to Adam's inadequacy, not Eve's insufficiency. Woman was made by God to meet man's deficiency." – John MacArthur

✓ A Measure of Worth

1 Peter 3:7 (ESV) Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way [*to know experientially*]

✓ A Sense of Superiority

1 Peter 3:7 (ESV) ...showing honor [*respect*] to the woman as the weaker vessel...

What Marital Submission IS:

✓ To willingly placing herself under the authority of her husband

✓ To ultimately serve as an act of obedience to God

ACTION STEP 2: Husbands must love their wives

Colossians 3:19 (ESV) Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

Ephesians 5:25 (ESV) Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...

This type of love is a matter of his will and not based on performance (same love God has for man) – love is a choice.

How does a husband love his wife?

✓ Protects her from sin and leads her into a pure life before God

Ephesians 5:26 (ESV) ...that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

✓ Puts her needs above his own

Ephesians 5:28 (ESV) In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29** For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, **30** because we are members of his body.

ACTION STEP 3: Children must obey their parents

Colossians 3:20 (ESV) Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Ephesians 6:1 (ESV) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), 3 "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

Two-Pronged Submissiveness Parents Should Expect:

- **Action-Based Obedience** - Behavior (it is the right thing to do)
- **Attitude-Based Obedience** - Honor (it is the respectful thing to do)
The stability of a society can be dependent on a child's obedience and respect for authority.

ACTION STEP 4: Fathers are not to provoke their children

Colossians 3:21 (ESV) Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Ephesians 6:4 (ESV) Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

- Fathers are mentioned here because they are the "head" of the family
- This command applies to the parent(s) or whoever has authority over the child
- **Rules without relationship leads to rebellion. – Josh McDowell**

If you're expecting *action and attitude-based obedience* from your child but have no relationship with them, don't be surprised if they rebel.

Two-Pronged Submissiveness Children Should Expect:

- **Reasonable Demands from Parent** (don't provoke)
 - ✓ Make rules for protection rather than control
 - ✓ Don't punish for past sin(s)
 - ✓ Don't say and do things to purposefully make your child angry
- **Consistent Devotion to Spiritual Guidance** (instruct in God's Ways)
Ephesians 6:4 (ESV) Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
 - ✓ Spiritual guidance in the Word
 - ✓ Spiritual guidance in deed
 - Fathers (guardians) must be consistent in this spiritual guidance
 - Don't depend on the church exclusively